Remarks

1. The present response is to the Office Action mailed the above-referenced case on October 15, 2007. Claims 1-41 are standing for examination.

First Claim Rejection – 35 USC § 103(a)

2. Claims 1-5, 12-16, and 27-29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dunn et al., US 5999612, hereinafter Dunn, in view of Has et al., US 6230137, hereinafter Has, and further in view of Vander Molen, US 4520576, hereinafter Vander Molen.

Applicant's Response to first claim rejection

3. Applicant's claim 1 recites in part "...a plurality of speech engines that recognize speech and synthesize speech to allow the speech-based conversations to occur over the first connection port and the second connection port."

4. The examiner, in his rejection, asserts "Dunn does not explicitly teaches, a plurality of speech engines that recognize speech and synthesize speech to allow the speech-based conversations to occur over the first connection port and the second connection port.

Has teaches,

a plurality of speech engines that recognize speech and synthesize speech to allow the speech-based conversations to occur over the first connection port and the second connection port (Has, col.1, line 15 - co1.14, line 50)."

The examiner continues: "Has discloses a first device for inputting at least two speech signals designating the operating functions and/or the components of the household appliance; a second device, operatively connected to the first device, for recognizing the operating functions and/or the components designated by the speech

signals; a third device, for converting the speech signals, after being recognized, into a given control command to operate the household appliance (Has, col.2, line 67 - col.3, line 7). Hence, Has teaches of system with a second device (i.e., Applicants' speech engine) for recognizing (i.e., Applicants' recognize) the operating instructions and/or components designated by the speech signals (i.e., Applicants' speech). Has discloses, "The speech signal recognition is preferably carried out in a speaker-independent manner. However, it can also be carried out in a speaker-dependent manner in particular in a speaker-group-dependent manner. The speech of adults exhibits speech characteristics which distinguish them from the speech characteristics of children. In this embodiment of the household appliance according to the invention, children can be excluded from actuating the household appliance (Has, col.5, line 66 - col.6, line 6) and "The speech signal recognition is preferably carried out in a speaker-independent manner, but the speech signal recognition can also be carried out in a speaker-dependent manner through the use of the second device 41, so that it becomes possible to authorize only specific persons, for example only the adult members of a household, to actuate the household appliance. (Has, col.9, lines 53-59).

Hence, Has implies the use of multiple speech engines capable of distinguishing speech characteristics of children from adults so that children can be excluded from actuating the household appliances.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of Has with the teachings of Dunn to provide a household appliance which overcomes the above-mentioned disadvantages of the heretofore-known appliances of this general type and which provides a simple, reliable, and rapid speech-controlled operation for the household appliance" (Has, col.2, lines 1 0-1 4) "by allowing for seamless and effective integration of telephone services into cable networks and/or other broadband networks" (Dunn, col.2, lines 11-1 3); through the use of a central computer that includes an adapter containing ports for connecting to the Internet through either the broadband network of the service provider or through the public switched telephone network (PSTN)."

5. Applicant herein presents arguments which clearly point out how the language in the claims are patentably distinct from the reference of Dunn, in view of Has.

The applicant respectfully traverses the examiner's assertion that Has teaches "a plurality of speech engines". The examiner cites col 5 line 66 - col 6 line 6, that Has teaches ability of achieving speaker dependence to avoid children from giving unauthorized commands by taking advantage of the fact that "the speech of adults exhibits speech characteristics which distinguish them from the speech characteristics of children" (the second citation noted). This can be accomplished by the single speech recognition engine (the second device of the first citation). The examiner then applies (col 9 lines 53-50) as if they require at least a second speech engine. But this passage is simply a more particular recitation of the same notion: "The speech signal recognition is preferably performed in a speaker-independent manner, but the speech signal recognition can also be carried out in a speaker-dependent manner through the use of the second device 41, so that it becomes possible..."

The Examiner simply assumes that "second device" means "second speech engine", but 41 has been referred to before (col 5, line 37) as a second device to contrast it with the first device 3 (the microphone) and the third device 42 (the device that converts recognized text into commands), and this passage is the same as the passage starting at col 5, line 66 (previously cited) which implies that the second device achieves speaker-dependence again by taking advantages of differences in the speech characteristics of children and adults, NOT through use of a second speech engine.

Therefore, the limitation in claim 1 of "... a plurality of speech engines that recognize speech and synthesize speech to allow the speech-based conversations to occur over the first connection port and the second connection port." is not taught. Claim 1 is therefore patentable over Dunn in view of Has and Vander Molen, as the examiner does not assert Vander Molen for the limitation of the plurality of speech engines in the claim.

6. As claim 1 has been shown to be patentable, claims 2-26 are patentable at least as depended from a patentable claim, and the rejections cited in the action referring to these depended claims are moot.

7. Claim 27 has been amended herein to recite, as in claim 1, a plurality of speech engines, and is patentable therefore over the cited art by the same reasons as asserted above on behalf of claim 1.

8. Claims 28-41 are now patentable at least as depended from a patentable claim, and the rejections applying to these depended claims are moot.

Summary

9. As all of the claims standing for examination have been shown to be patentable as amended and argued above over the art of record, applicant respectfully requests reconsideration, and that the present case be passed quickly to issue. If there are any time extensions needed beyond any extension specifically requested with this response, such extension of time is hereby requested. If there are any fees due beyond any fees paid with this amendment, authorization is given to deduct such fees from deposit account 50-0534.

Respectfully Submitted,
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